

ASSAY OFFICES, GOLD DISTRICTS, NORTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, &c.

To accompany bill H. R. No. 84.

DECEMBER 22, 1831.

Reprinted by order of the House of Representatives.

Mr. CARSON, from the select committee to which the subject had been referred, made the following

REPORT:

*The select committee for the purpose of inquiring into the expediency of establishing assay offices within the gold districts of North and South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia, have adopted the report made at the last session of Congress, together with a bill.*

The discovery, within the few last years, of a large tract of gold mines, pervading an extensive district in the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, is a subject of great interest. The reports, surveys, letters, and other information, procured by this committee, show that the high expectation which has been formed of the extent and richness of these mines, is confirmed by daily experience and more accurate examination; so that it is evident that their produce must become more and more abundant, and cannot but have a material influence upon the wealth, arts, commerce, and currency of the whole Union.

Since the year 1825, when the first native gold of this country was coined at the United States' Mint, there has been a rapid but regular increase of bullion from the same mines offered for coinage, until, during the last year, four-fifths of the whole gold coinage of our mint was from native gold. The extension of the buildings, and improvements of the machinery of the mint at Philadelphia, authorized by the appropriations of 1829 and 1830, have now given great additional power and facility to its operations; and it is, besides, obvious, that, should such an alteration be made in the legal proportional value of our gold and silver coinage, as to make it correspond more nearly to the average proportional market value of the two metals, the demand for gold bullion, and the amount of gold coinage at our mint, must increase with great rapidity.

In addition to the native gold thus coined within the last four years, a large supply of the gold used in the arts and manufactures of the country comes from this quarter; and the committee are also informed that there is, besides, a considerable amount of gold in bullion or under private stamps, circulating as a sort of imperfect currency in the States in which gold is found.

From these circumstances, the attention of many citizens of those States has been for some time turned to the establishment of one or more public

assay offices, to ascertain and attest, by stamps, certificates, or otherwise, that value and degree of purity of gold bullion, so as to give greater security and facility to all the workers of gold mines, and the buyers, and sellers, and receivers of bullion, and thus stimulate the enterprise and industry of all employed in the business, and increase its value to them and to the country.

As a large proportion of this gold, then, is ultimately destined for the United States' Mint, which will probably hereafter mainly depend on this source for its regular supply; as it is believed to be of importance to the best interests of the nation to take advantage of every circumstance, which, without arbitrary legislative interference, may augment the proportion of metallic currency employed in its exchanges; and as bullion itself, when the value is so regulated and attested as to ensure public confidence, may be useful here, as it is in other commercial countries, sometimes as a part of the currency, and more largely as the basis and security of bank paper; it has appeared to the committee, that the establishment, by the United States, of one or more assay offices within the southern gold district, (as proposed in the Legislature of North Carolina,) under the direction of the mint, whilst it would prove highly advantageous to the industry engaged in those mines, would also give steadier supplies and greater regularity to the operations of the mint, and both directly and indirectly tend to the great and constitutional objects of the coinage of money, and the regulation of currency.

The committee have accordingly prepared a bill for this purpose, which is herewith reported.

The papers appended to this report have been selected from the mass of communications in possession of the committee, and are believed to contain, in the shortest compass, the information on this subject which can be most relied upon.

#### MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,

*Philadelphia, January 14, 1831.*

DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 6th, with the report accompanying it, came safely to hand on the 9th.

In regard to the expense of establishing an assay office, it may, I think, be stated, that to furnish an apartment with the apparatus and fixtures requisite for this object, might be effected for a sum not exceeding \$500. This estimate has of course no relation to the charge of erecting buildings, but proceeds on the supposition that an adequate accommodation might be obtained on an annual rent.

The current expenses of conducting the process, exclusive of the compensation of the assayer, and of his attendant, if one should be found necessary, would be trivial. The cost of charcoal would be the principal charge. Calculating on fifteen to twenty assays daily, the expense of fuel and chemical agents, &c., would not probably exceed one dollar per day. An attendant, at ordinary wages, would, however, be required, if the assays should be numerous.

The compensation of the assayer, if it be contemplated that it should consist of a specific salary, and not be derived from a fee paid by the owner of the gold, would constitute the chief part of the annual expense.

I am supposing, in the above remarks, that the bullion to be assayed will be brought to the office in ingots, or other forms not requiring to be melted by the assayer. If this preparatory process were made a part of his employment, the expenses of the establishment would be sensibly increased.

You suggest the idea of annexing to the assay office an office of deposite, and issuing certificates of value, to be rendered acceptable in circulation by making them receivable at the Treasury of the United States. This measure seems liable to exception as presenting an anomaly in the action of the Government. I apprehend, also, that the certificates would be found an inconvenient form of currency, leading to perplexing results, if counterfeited, and probably not calculated to promote the object in view more perfectly than it could be accomplished by other measures, coming within the forms with which we are familiar. Mint certificates are not received at the Treasury of the United States.

It is probable, that, in the new mint establishment, we shall be authorized to pay deposits, both of gold and silver, promptly, in coin, at a small deduction, not exceeding one half per cent. Apprised of this being done, would not the banks of the State receive gold, in bars of ascertained value, at the mint deduction, deriving from the increased circulation thus given to their paper a satisfactory equivalent for the expense of brief delay involved by sending the bullion to the mint? and would not the immediate vicinity of the bank be an eligible location for the proposed office?

Whatever inducements it may be deemed judicious to propose on the part of the United States, for the purpose of soliciting from our domestic mines a copious supply of gold for coinage, it would seem most expedient that it should consist of inviting facilities offered at the mint, the transportation of it thither being left to other superintendence than that of the Government.

I would recommend that the fineness and value per dwt. be stamped on the several bars, and that a corresponding certificate of value should be issued, to accompany each bar until it reaches the mint or other destination, where its form would be changed.

The assayer will, it is presumed, receive his instructions from the mint, and be required by his official obligations, to make his assays as exact and critical as they are here. The fidelity of the assay would soon become established in the public confidence; and so much gold, thus certified, as might be in request for the purposes of the cuts, would be as available as the value thereof in coins.

Could not the State effectually promote the accommodation of the mines, by allowing special privileges, if this should be found necessary, to such bank as may be near to the locality selected for the assay office, which, without being onerous to any other interest, might be an adequate inducement to the bank to pay the mint value of the gold thus assayed, and assume the care of forwarding it for coinage?

I rely on you to accept these remarks, not as opinions obtruded, but as suggestions respectfully submitted for consideration.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,  
SAMUEL MOORE.

The CHAIRMAN of the Select Committee  
on establishing assay offices in N. Carolina and Georgia.

*Report of the operations of the Mint of the United States during the year 1830.*

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,

*Philadelphia, 1st January, 1831.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit a report on the general transactions of the mint within the last year.

The coinage effected within that period amounts to \$3,155,620, comprising 3643,105 in gold coins, \$2,495,400 in silver, \$17,115 in copper, and consisting of 8,357,191 pieces of coin, viz:

Half eagles,	126,351	pieces, making	\$631,755
Quarter eagles,	4,540	" "	11,350
Half dollars,	4,764,800	" "	2,382,400
Dismes,	510,000	" "	51,000
Half dismes,	1,240,000	" "	62,000
Cents,	1,711,500	" "	17,115
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8,357,191			\$3,155,620
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Of the amount of gold coined within the last year, about \$125,000 were derived from Mexico, South America, and the West Indies; \$19,000 from Africa, \$466,000 from the gold region of the United States, and about \$33,000 from sources not ascertained.

Of the gold of the United States above mentioned, \$24,000 may be stated to have been received from Virginia, \$204,000 from North Carolina, \$26,000 from South Carolina, and \$212,000 from Georgia.

In the last annual report, the progressive development of the gold region of the United States was illustrated by referring to the increase of the annual receipts from North Carolina, which, previously to 1824, had been inconsiderable, but, from that year to 1829, inclusive, had advanced from \$5,000 to \$128,000; and also, to the then novel occurrence of gold having been received at the mint from Virginia and South Carolina, about \$2,500 having been received from the former, and \$3,500 from the latter. The past year exhibits, in relation to all those States, a conspicuous increase in the production of gold, and presents, also, the remarkable fact of \$212,000 in gold received from Georgia, from which State no specimen thereof had been presented at the mint in any previous year.

The coinage above exhibited exceeds the amount of any former year. The demand remains, nevertheless, unabated; and the mass of bullion now in the vaults of the mint is large beyond any previous example.

These facts confirm the expediency of the provisions for extending the mint establishment, and indicate that the measure has not been premature. In relation to the structure erecting under those provisions, I have the satisfaction to state, that, although its progress has been, during a part of the past season, unexpectedly impeded, the preparations making for a vigorous prosecution of the work at the earliest practicable moment, authorize the hope that the commencement of the operations of coinage in the new edifice will be deferred but for a short period beyond the time contemplated when the foundation of the building was laid, namely, the fourth of July of the present year. Nor is a less confident hope entertained that the character of



the structure, as a public edifice, and its efficiency for the purposes of its destination, will be found to accord with the wishes of the Government, as indicated by the appropriations granted for the object.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL MOORE.

The PRESIDENT of the United States.

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*Report on the establishment of a mint in the Legislature of the State of North Carolina.*

The select committee, to whom was referred a resolution on the subject of establishing a branch of the United States' Mint in the gold region of North Carolina, have considered the same, and respectfully report:

That, in review of the matters submitted to them, they have seen new cause to adore and bless the Ruler of the Universe, who doth not, as the rulers of earth do, dispense his favors and benefits with capricious partiality, but with foreseeing wisdom and compensating distribution. Different countries, like different individuals, possess each their distinguishing endowments and resources, upon the knowledge and development of which depend, for the most part, individual or national prosperity and happiness. Nature, says the poet, gave to the horse swiftness of foot, to the lion strength, to the fox cunning, and to man prudence; yet there was reserved for woman, beauty—a gift not less than that of swiftness, of strength, of cunning, or of prudence. In like manner, nature, in giving to one State harbors or noble rivers, has given commerce; to another, with dense population, manufactures; to another, with fertile soil, favorable climate, and ready markets, she has given the various products of the earth: in one place, corn, in one place cotton, and in another sugar. One State is fitted for grazing, a second has mines of salt, a third mines of coal and iron. Yet, for North Carolina, was reserved gold; to which all the arts of peace and war, and commerce itself, are subservient.

*The intrinsic and relative importance of her mines to North Carolina must be the foundation and reason for adopting the resolution.*

Your committee have, therefore, made such inquiries, and obtained such information under these heads, as time and place would allow of. These inquiries, and their own reflections, have led your committee to the conclusion, that the mining interests of North Carolina are certainly in no degree inferior to the great agricultural, planting, manufacturing or commercial interest of the other States. In no commercial, agricultural, or manufacturing speculation now open, does it appear to your committee that a mo-nied capital, not exceeding one hundred and fifty-thousand dollars for the whole State, could have been invested as it has been in mining, so as to produce \$500,000; which sum, there can be no doubt, if not more, has been obtained from the mines of North Carolina during the present year. This sum, too, has been obtained by the mere surplus labor of the country; not by labor withdrawn from any advantageous application. Agriculture has not been more neglected in consequence of working mines, but more earnestly attended to, as is natural upon an increased demand and cash markets for grain and other productions of the farmer. Sugar, cotton, and rice, the

great staples of southern and southwestern States, are cultivated with little or no profit, except where, from proximity to rivers, and unhealthiness of climate, white labor is precluded. The cotton planter, rice planter, and sugar planter, therefore, begin and carry on their establishments by means of slaves introduced into the State, or those purchased there; and free labor does not seem much promoted. Mining operations not only afford profitable employment for any number of slaves, but hold out high rewards and a healthful occupation for any excess of free population. The expenditure also of mining establishments is of such a nature, that it flows like blood throughout the universal system. The farmer, the smith, the carpenter, the stone cutter, the waggoner, and the merchant—in short, nearly every profession is requisite and paid. North Carolina has been compared to Switzerland, and the comparison, when applied to the mountainous sections of our State, is strikingly just. This part of North Carolina, like Switzerland, is debarred from commerce by geographical position; and, like Switzerland, is inhabited by a hardy, free and intelligent people. They, like the Swiss, finding no motive or reward of exertion at home, have hitherto emigrated; and, although they may not have become the mercenary ministers and victims of war, despotism, and famine, yet, as pioneers of new settlements, or in populous cities, they have died far from the places of their nativity. The mines supply to Saxony want of commercial advantages; and it is mineral wealth which has caused many populous cities to grow upon bleak, barren, and almost inaccessible mountains.

Already, and in the very infancy of the business, are the citizens of the State indebted to the mining interest for the restoration of the greatly depreciated currency of the country to a sound and safe circulating medium. The bills of the banks of North Carolina, at a discount but three years since of more than 8 per cent., are now at par. That they continue at par, depends upon mining success; for if any causes produce an abandonment of the mines, and golden harvests cease to be garnered up in the banks, your committee can see no reason why the same embarrassments should not recur.

If the mining interest of North Carolina is found not to be depreciated, but enhanced by a comparison in results with the gold mines of other countries—if she derive from her mines all the advantages which another country derives from cultivating some great and cash staple, or from any manufacture whatever, then are the committee of opinion that our fellow citizens, in preferring their solicitation for the establishment of a mint near us, will present themselves, not as importunate and claimless petitioners, but as suitors asking for what they may expect in justice to obtain. For protecting the commercial interest of the commercial States, the General Government despatches ambassadors, and liberally expends millions in forts and naval armaments. The manufacturing States are encouraged by high tariffs, and the sugar planting interest is advanced by duties on sugars imported. To fix the standard purity, and to regulate the coinage of the precious metals in all particulars, is exclusively within the power of the General Government. No individual State participates in this right; so that, be the advantages of a coinage at home ever so great, or be the disadvantages of a distant one ever so sensibly felt, North Carolina cannot relieve herself by an effort of her own. The powers of the General Government respecting the coin currency of the United States is not a divided right: it is not implied or disputed, but express and in exclusion. North Carolina cannot coin her own gold, as she might make her own roads and canals, or

clear her own harbors and rivers. She may erect light-houses, but cannot establish a mint. Else so heavy is the interest upon dead capital incurred by this State alone, that the produce of the mines would soon be impressed among ourselves, and bear emblematically and literally the horn of plenty, instead of *E pluribus unum*.

The value of the gold from different mines is so various, and, from want of means of detection, adulteration has become so common, that gold bullion has for some time ceased to be considered as money. While in ingots it cannot be estimated at a definite sum, but accounts must run upon interest until a remittance and return from Philadelphia. In many instances where the sums are large, the season unfavorable, and opportunities infrequent, there is a loss of full six months—seldom less than four. Even deposited in an office of the U. S. Bank, it does not become available funds; nor will the bank itself stop an interest account of another bank, or of an individual, upon a deposit made of bullion, before a statement is received from the mint. The amount of interest thus lost to the States of North Carolina and Georgia, for the present year alone, upon what should have been *money*, and was not *money*, but unproductive material, is, as may be easily computed, very large. For succeeding years, in all probability, such loss will more than equal the interest upon the cost and current expenses of a mint.

It is taken for granted, that, to establish and preserve a sound currency in any country, there must be in that country an amount of gold or silver of known value, proportionate to the paper money in circulation. Before the mines were opened, however, it was in silver coin alone, not in gold at a premium, that the banks of North Carolina could have pretended to pay their notes. But the transport of silver, especially to the upper districts, is so expensive and hazardous, and the exact price of dollars so unsettled, that, when experiments were made to answer the incessant drain upon supplies obtained at heavy per centages, the attempt was abandoned, and bank directors sought to support their sinking credit by sundry ingenious expedients. It is believed that the books of the Salisbury Branch Bank contain accounts relating to the purchase and transport of dollars, which would furnish a strong and experimental illustration of what it must cost to keep on hand specie to answer the urgent demands of a small institution. Any given amount of the precious metals passes off imperceptibly, yet rapidly, by the thousand channels of speculating brokers, of artists, of merchants, of emigrants, and of travellers; but the empty reservoirs experience no replenishing springs—no restoring showers. What are difficulties and losses to our citizens when money transactions are contracted, and in time of peace, will become ruin and impossibility as dealings are extended, and during war.

Now, your committee submit with great confidence to the wisdom of the House, that the immediate conversion of gold bullion into money at home, will ensure in a simple, yet effectual way, a constant and abiding specie deposit, abundantly adequate always to pay off any emission of bank paper which the exigencies of the country may require. They further feel assured that North Carolina, locally and circumstantially situated as she is, cannot in any other manner permanently effect an object so vitally important; and that all financial projects which do not result in this, will be found impracticable or extravagant. Taking the worst case, and admitting that gold coins may be speedily withdrawn—admitting even that they be received into the bank vaults hot, and that they should be drafted out before they were

cool, still it is apparent they have answered their end, and paid a debt. The bank may, and will be forthwith supplied afresh for each successive demand. So long as the State shall prudently imitate the policy of other nations, and forbear to touch the mining interest with the paralyzing finger of taxation, and so long as she welcomes the coming in of foreign capital and skill, the replacing supply will be ceaseless. As in the order of the natural world, new generations of the golden eagle will take flight from their native hills throughout whatever time the care of the State be exercised to cherish, not to strangle, establishments so happily springing into birth.

Towards conducting an extensive gold or silver mining concern, proximity to the place where unproductive bullion may be converted into available cash, is of material consequence. This is especially the case where the money capitals of the country are small, and sums in hands of banks or individuals insufficient, or not to be obtained for settling the current expenses of the mine. Under such circumstances, the workers are forced to provide from a distance, and keep reserved large amounts, on which they, of course, lose interest, commissions, and insurance. Besides this, they lose interest upon the bullion itself and cost of transport, which, were it immediately coined, would not only serve in payment for one occasion, but would naturally continue in circulation until bought up as any other article of merchandise, and an equivalent be substituted. It is also among the great benefits of mining establishments upon a large scale, that the laborers are usually paid off in cash at short intervals, and indebtedness thus avoided. To facilitate this, Mexico has six provincial mints, and one at the metropolis.

Your committee are further of opinion, that, independent of direct and immediate advantages, there are collateral and consequential advantages, which North Carolina would derive from home coinage of her bullion. It is well known that a great proportion of the gold now coined at the United States' Mint, passes directly into the consumption of the arts. In fact, the impression of coinage serves only as an index of purity, and is read as if marked 22 carats. Your committee, therefore, think that the assay and coinage of our gold near where it is produced, would lead to gold leaf and wire manufactories, to fabrication of jewelry, and other uses of gold in the arts. Minor establishments of this sort, like work shops somewhat removed from the great cities, are very usual; and cheapness of living, health, light taxes, and other advantages which North Carolina enjoys, are much considered. Thus, Geneva, in Switzerland, has small and tributary manufactories of watches and jewelry, and is herself the great manufactory for the Paris dealers. That the profit of manufacturing a good part of our own gold will, eventually, be retained in the State, there can be no doubt, if we judge from the rapid enlargement of old shops, and the addition of new ones.

The importance of the discovery, and working of the gold mines in North Carolina, is materially enhanced by the decrease, so alarming to other countries, in the supply of the precious metals—a decrease so enormous as to seem almost incredible without well authenticated statements. The influence of this decrease, is now lamentably felt throughout every country of Europe, in a higher or less degree. Your committee extract a few sentences from a recent publication, written to explain the causes of the distresses in England, and which has attracted much attention.

“The steadiest industry (says the author of the pamphlet referred to) can no longer insure success. The best founded expectations end but in disappointment: the wisest schemes lead but to ruin. It is not one branch of



industry alone that feels the pressure of the times. One manufacture is unsuccessful—all are equally borne down by one general oppression. Nor is this evil, though more acutely felt in England, peculiar to this country. The industry of every quarter of the world attests its infliction. From the Neva to the Ganges, from the Mediterranean to the Pacific ocean, its influence, lessened or exaggerated by the commercial systems of each country, acts in every region of the earth. Effects (proceeds the writer) so universally felt, it would be unphilosophical to attribute to any but a universal cause; and none is adequate to produce them but the increased value of the precious metals."

An adjoining summary account of the annual supply of gold and silver, is thus stated:

	Previous to 1810.	Subsequent to 1810.
Europe and Asia	\$4,000,000	\$5,000,000
Indian Archipelago	2,980,000	2,980,000
Africa	1,000,000	1,000,000
America	47,000,000	15,000,000
Total	54,980,000	23,980,000

Decrease of the *annual* supply since 1810, 31,000,000 dollars, amounting, during the last nineteen years, to an aggregate of 589,000,000 dollars.

But it is not alone this extraordinary *decrease* in the supply to which the rise in value of the precious metals is attributable. Besides the decrease of supply, there has been a great increase in the demand for gold and silver since 1810, consequent, in part, upon the augmented consumption.

The number of gold and silver watches manufactured in France was, in 1789, 200,000, and in 1819, had increased to 300,000. At present it is stated at 400,000.

In Mr. Huskinson's speech of 18th May, 1830, it is stated that the duty upon wrought gold and silver had risen in net produce from less than £5,000 in 1824 to upwards of £105,000 in 1828—"a rise more than twenty fold, notwithstanding the greatly diminished supply from the mines, and the consequent constantly increasing value of the precious metals." A numerical statement of the actual supply and demand of the precious metals for the last nineteen years is stated as follows: The supply for these nineteen years being estimated at 23,980,000 annually, making an aggregate of 455,980,000. Taking the metallic currency of the world at 3,000,000,000 of dollars, and estimating the wear and tear, recoinage, loss by shipwreck, and at 2 p. mille annually, it would in 19 years amount to - - - \$114,000,000

The increase of the absolute quantity which has become requisite since 1810, estimating at 6 per cent. - - - 180,000,000

The chasm in circulation occasioned by withdrawing of paper money since 1815, and since filled up by gold and silver coin 300,000,000

And finally, the consumption of the precious metals by artificers, &c. at 30,000,000 dollars annually, amounts in nineteen years to - - - - - 570,000,000

Total demand since 1810 - - - - - 1,164,000,000

Deduct supply from mine - - - - - 455,620,000

The deficiency appears to have been - - - - - 708,380,000

Your committee do not intend to enlarge upon the many ruinous consequences, which, already in Europe, and to some extent in the United States, have ensued from the well established deficiency of gold and silver to such an amount. It is sufficient for their present purpose to point out, as one consequence of this decrease, that an enormous rise has of necessity taken place in the exchangeable value of the precious metals. The only source of restoration is the mines; and the period when they shall once more render their supply is the earliest looked in England "for general success in commercial and industrious pursuits, lightened burdens, and a favourable change in the condition of the productive classes." It is, nevertheless, anticipated "that the unsettled state, both of Mexico and the South American States, must have the effect of keeping in obedience, for some time yet to come, the full development of mining industry in those countries." Your committee think it is acknowledged, that, besides the rise in value of gold and silver jointly, as shown from the foregoing estimates, there is also a rise in the value of gold relatively to silver. This may be sensibly felt in North Carolina at no distant time, and when the wave which originates in the great commercial world shall have rolled itself progressively hither to beat upon our shores. Towards continuing the supply of what is expressively called the "world's money," North Carolina, experimental, limited, and recent as the operations upon her mines have been, nevertheless contributes no inconsiderable item. The total produce from the much celebrated Ural mines, in Russian Asia, from 1814 to 1824, has not exceeded, according to Humboldt's estimate, 17,000,000 dollars, i. e. \$1,700,000 annually. By the most recent accounts from Chili, the yearly produce of the mines is stated to be 190,000 dollars, including, as would seem, silver as well as gold.

For the last nineteen years, all Brazil is not estimated to have exceeded an annual average of 1,240,000 dollars. Peru, which, from 1752 to 1801, had yielded annually upwards of 2,000,000 dollars, by the last accounts, produced nothing worth mention. By a report from the executive government of New Grenada to Congress, it is boastingly stated, that the mines in 1822 produced 1,270,000 dollars, as would appear, of silver and gold; and this amount has been since greatly diminished.

These estimates might be extended to the other sources from whence gold is derived, and go still further to show that North Carolina, unobtrusive as she has hitherto been upon the subject of her mines, need not shun comparison with any gold mining country in the world. The half million of dollars obtained during the present year from the mines of this State, has been obtained, as is well known, under all the embarrassments and discouragements consequent upon new enterprises in a new country. The auxiliary resources of the country were not developed, and there were no miners, as in other countries, a distinct profession. What has been done has been done under uncertainty and fear of results—even against the prejudices of a majority of our citizens. Yet have the establishments gone on increasing in numbers, in capital, and in returns. Indefinite fears of evil consequences which might follow gold mining, have given place to experimental conviction of beneficial influence. Jealousy of monopoly is becoming ridiculous, and mining hazards are more correctly appreciated. Should a favoring instead of a smothering policy continue to be extended to the mining interest, and correct views be attained of what are the true riches of the State, there is every promise that the start North Carolina has taken will enable her to leave behind all other gold mining countries in the race of prosperity and happiness.

Comparing the mining advantages North Carolina possesses over other countries, it is a principal and almost inestimable one that her mines are virgin and uninjured. In old mining countries, whose hidden treasures have been sought by "the laborious plunder" of ages, the veins pursued to a great depth, if not exhausted, or, as is most frequent, inundated with water, can be worked only at an enormously augmented expenditure. The outcrop of the bold auriferous veins of North Carolina are considered peculiar, inasmuch that ores are obtained from the very surface in abundance and value, equalling those, which, in other mining countries, are procured from deep shafts and extensive galleries. From all probability of famine, pestilence, and desolating war, North Carolina is exempt; and nowhere is property held by more secure tenure. In South America, on the other hand, a late traveller laments, that never, in any place, "has destruction been more mischievously active, more complete, and more manifest, than on the property of the mining establishments. Their expensive amalgamation works have been wantonly destroyed, their extensive mills have been plundered and dilapidated, their mines have crumbled in and filled with rubbish and water, and the arbitrary exactions of contending chieftains have reduced the proprietors to a state of beggary."

In situations for inexhaustible supplies of timber, and in facilities for procuring and transporting every species of machinery, the North Carolina mines are unequalled. To a majority of the mines in South America and Mexico steam engines cannot possibly be conveyed; and could they be, fuel must be wanting. At the Catorce mines in Mexico, a moderate sized stick of timber for a stamping mill, costs 600 dollars. To the Santa Ana mines, in Colombia, now worked by a large English capital, nothing can be transported, except upon the heads or shoulders of Indians. To even mules access is impracticable. The price of labor is also an important item rather in favor of North Carolina. At Potosi, a miner gains 2 English shillings, or about 42 cents, per day. At the Colombia mines, a skilful miner receives one dollar. The German and Italian laboring miners employed in France, work 8 hours of 24, and are paid from 41 to 60 cents. At New Castle, in England, the wages are a guinea per week, with lodging and fire. Humboldt states \$1 12½ is paid in many parts of Mexico for only 6 hours' labor of the 24. Many articles of great consumption are also cheaper in this than in other mining countries.

Your committee are aware that many persons appreciate the importance of the mining interest in the abstract; but are disposed to postpone, to some indefinite time, any efforts to extend its beneficial effects. They, however, who neglect to make available, speedily and to the fullest extent, the invaluable treasures entrusted to them, appear to differ in no material respect from the unfaithful steward, who buried his talents instead of putting them to productive usefulness. It will probably be a century before the mines of North Carolina can attain their highest yield. Much time must elapse before the construction of buildings, choice of officers, and procuring of utensils and machinery for a mint, are followed by an establishment in full operation. It is, therefore, that, in extending encouragement and facilities to the mining interest in reasonable ways, and in the preliminary measures to make them most exclusively beneficial to their influence, we are but planting a tree under whose full spread shade our posterity will repose.

The committee, therefore, respectfully recommend to the House the adoption of the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be requested to use all proper exertions to obtain the establishment of a branch of the mint of the United States in the State of North Carolina.

*Resolved*, That the Governor transmit a copy of the foregoing resolution and report to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

GIDEON GLENN, *Chairman*.

SALISBURY, N. C., 22d March, 1830.

DEAR SIR: Your esteemed favor of the 3d ultimo, enclosing me one of your circulars as chairman of the select committee "to which was referred a resolution on the subject of establishing a branch of the United States, mint in the gold region of North Carolina," I have had the honor of receiving some weeks ago. Absence from home during a good part of the time since, and other engagements until now, have not allowed me sufficient leisure to comply with your request. I will, however, now attempt to give you a short sketch of the history of the gold mines of this State, and to furnish you with such facts and general information connected with the same, as I am in possession of, and that seem to be called for by the inquiries you make.

It is now about thirty years since gold was discovered in North Carolina. It was found disseminated in the sands and gravel of watercourses; first in Cabarras county, and soon afterwards in Montgomery. The washing of these streams, deposits for the precious metals until within a few years past, was principally confined to the two counties just named. The greater portion of the gold thus found consisted of small pieces, varying in size from one pennyweight down to particles so minute as to require the point of a small knife to take them up. At most of the mines, however, it is not uncommon to find pieces of a much larger size; for example, at one of the deposits in Cabarras, a single piece was found, weighing twenty-eight pounds avoirdupois, and a number of other pieces, varying from four to sixteen pounds. At that mine, the proprietor estimates that about one hundred pounds avoirdupois were taken up in pieces above one pound weight. These large pieces compose but a small portion of the whole product of the mine.

At a mine in Montgomery, a number of pieces above one pound weight has been found; one of four pounds eleven ounces, and another of three pounds. In Anson county, during the summer before the last, one piece of ten pounds nett, one of four pounds, and a number of small pieces, were taken up out of the sand and gravel of Richardson's creek.

All these discoveries were made principally in or near the beds of streams; but in some instances deposits of considerable extent have been found on the sides and tops of hills, as at Parker's, at Moore's, and Crawford's, in Montgomery, and as at Harris's, in Mecklenburg county. It was not, however, until about five years ago that the *gold mines*, properly speaking, were discovered in North Carolina; *that is*, gold in regular and well defined veins. This discovery, like that of alluvial deposits, was in some measure accidental.

Mathias Barringer, of Montgomery county, while washing the sand and gravel of a small rivulet for gold, noticed, that, beyond a certain point, in as-



cending the stream, he could find no gold. Just at the point where the gold seemed to cease, he discovered a quartz vein running into the hill on one side of the channel, and at right angles with the rivulet. Having frequently taken up out of the bed of the stream pieces of quartz with bits of gold attached to them, he came to the conclusion that the gold found scattered below must have come out of this quartz vein; and he determined to pursue it into the hill. He pursued it but a few feet, when he struck a rich and beautiful deposit of the metal, *in place*, in a matrix of quartz, and subsequently in the carbonate of lime. In following this vein about thirty or forty feet longitudinally, and not more than fifteen or eighteen feet in depth, he found a succession of *nests*, from which he took out more than fifteen thousand pennyweights of virgin gold. Shortly after this, the mine fell into other hands; since when, serious operations have not been resumed, on account of the water, though it is understood they shortly will be. This discovery of the metal in *regular veins* presented the subject in a new and interesting point of view, and turned the search for gold to the hills and high grounds, and particularly for veins traversing the earth. In the course of the summer, after the developments at Barringer's mine, some valuable veins were discovered in Mecklenburg county. The product of these, worked in the rudest manner, without skill or capital, was so great as to excite general notice, and stimulated the landholders in that section to search their possessions for hidden treasures. The mines now began to attract the attention of the public at a distance, and drew to the spot several persons of enterprise and some capital. Some of these made investments, and commenced erecting machinery, and working the veins with system and regularity.

The success of the first adventurers in this new enterprise induced others to follow; and for a time the attention of every body, who sought to engage in the mining business, was exclusively turned towards Mecklenburg county. The consequence was, that a constant search was kept up in that county for new localities; and the search was not in vain; many very promising veins were discovered. Thus the mines of Mecklenburg, being the first that attracted attention, and to which skill and management were first applied, got greatly the start of every other part of the region; more labor, capital, and skill having been expended on them, than of those of any other district: as a necessary consequence, the results have been greater in proportion.

The field being now pretty well occupied in Mecklenburg, the spirit of discovery applied itself elsewhere. In the course of the succeeding year, a vein, very extensive and productive, was discovered in Guilford county; and it was soon operated on by more than one hundred hands, who flocked in from the country around, and received permission to dig on it.

The discovery of one vein in a district furnishes the lights for finding others. The people of the neighborhood visit it, examine the appearances of the ores, and other signs and indications; and thus, in some degree, are qualified to make the search on their own lands and elsewhere. So it was in Guilford. The discovery of the first vein, was soon followed by the opening of a number of others; and so it will be in every district until the gold region is explored, so far as external signs go.

About this time, Cabarras county, which had hitherto only been considered as productive in its *washings*, was ascertained to be a *vein mining district*; and similar discoveries were made about the same period in Lincoln.

It is less than a year and a half since gold in veins was first discovered in Davidson county, it having previously been found in and near the beds of rivulets and creeks.

Within the past few months, veins have been opened in the adjoining county of Randolph. Rowan, situated between Davidson and Cabarras, embraces a considerable section of the gold region, and contains many veins of good external appearance and promise; and the metal is also found in the streams. Some few veins have also been opened in Iredell county, and are now in a course of development. While progress has been thus making in opening veins and ascertaining localities, some valuable discoveries of stream deposits occurred in a section of the State hitherto not suspected to be within the range of the gold region. I allude to the deposits in Burke, one of the mountainous counties of the State. In this county, at one, two, or more feet under the surface, a layer of sand and gravel is found of different degrees of thickness, from a few inches to sometimes more than a foot. In this layer, the virgin gold is found, generally in small particles, about the size of a pin's head, and very often as large as a grain of corn; it is separated and collected from the accompanying matter by washing. The abundance and convenience of water, and the absence of adhesive and tough clay in the auriferous layer, make the process of *washing* a very easy one in Burke.

A number of these deposits have been found, and are finding, and some of them have proved to be very productive. The one called "Brindle's mine," now owned by the Messrs. Carsons and others, has been the most extensively and successfully worked.

It is proper here to add, that, in the adjoining county of Rutherford, gold, in deposit, has also been found; but as yet not much labor has been directed to the developments. One vein is now working with considerable regularity and encouragement, and other veins of good expectation have been disclosed. Did time and my engagements permit, I should be pleased here to present you with a comparative view of the products of the mines of North Carolina and Brazil, taking the data of the Brazil mines from such books as treat on that subject. The difference in favor of North Carolina is much greater than would be imagined.

It might also be gratifying to have a comparative view of the *vein mines* in South America and this country.

I am not sufficiently well informed, as respects the South American gold veins, to draw proper conclusions. The materials, however, for such a view might soon be collected, as there are now here several persons of intelligence who wrought in the mines of Peru and Chili.

A gentleman of Baltimore, Richard Caton, Esq., some time since, sent me a printed copy of an official report made to the board of the "Anglo Colombian Mining Company," by the chief agent and superintendent of the mines in the Republic of Colombia. This report gives very full and minute details of the operations at Marmato, and of the results from various experiments made on the ores of these mines, which are mostly auriferous pyrites. In comparing these results, in reference to quantity of labor, time, and costs, with what is done at some of our veins of the best class, the difference is strikingly in favor of North Carolina.

Having thus, at your request, given you a rapid sketch of the history of the first discovery and gradual development of the gold mines of North Carolina, I will now, with as much briefness as possible, endeavor to furnish such information as I am in possession of, in answer to the circular of the committee.

*The first query seeks to ascertain the amount of gold found during the past year.*

I give it as my opinion, that it is next to impossible even to approximate the truth in this particular.

So numerous are the places of veins and deposits where gold is obtained, and so scattered are they along the whole range of country, so very deficient as yet in system is the whole business, with a few exceptions, and there are so many persons buying up the gold, that it is impossible to give any correct estimate of the product of the mines. With much more facility and accuracy could you ascertain the quantity of cotton or flour produced in this country. I am, therefore, unwilling to hazard even a conjecture on the subject. That the product, however, has been very considerable and increasing, we may discover in several ways. One of the best proofs is the great change that is perceptibly taking place in the monied concerns of the people. The upper part of North Carolina has very severely felt the pressure so generally complained of throughout the south. These difficulties are rapidly disappearing from the gold districts. The gold that is found, and put into circulation, and the sums that are expended in making experiments, erecting machinery, procuring labor and provisions, are producing important changes, and greatly improving the condition of the country. Nor does the statements from the mint furnish any evidence of the actual amount of gold found, for the obvious reason that only a small part of it reaches that establishment. The last report from the mint (1st of January, 1830,) shows an increase during 1829 of nearly *two hundred per cent.* over the receipts of 1828; but while this is an indication that the product of the mines is increasing, it is no criterion of what is actually found.

It may not be out of place here to remark, that hereafter the quantity of domestic gold that will be received at the mint will bear a less proportion to the whole amount found, than has been the case heretofore. The reason is this. Heretofore, Philadelphia was pretty much the only market for the article. The artists and merchants in New York and other cities in the Union, were unacquainted with the article, and therefore, through fear of deception, dealt but little in it. This occasioned the most of the gold to be taken to Philadelphia, where, if not sold to the artists or merchants, it was deposited in the mint; and, by one channel or other, a portion of it always did reach that establishment. The case is now different. A market for the article is opening in the most of our cities, south and north. The artist begins to use more of it in manufacturing of jewelry and gold leaf. It is to be recollected that the greater part of the gold found here is of a higher purity than the coinage even of the United States, and, owing to this circumstance, dispenses with the necessity of re-purifying it previous to its use in the arts; and, owing to the difference of exchange, it is in demand for exportation in the shape of bullion. A person having remittances to make to Europe, finds it better to buy gold than to pay a premium on bills. Indeed, but for the premium obtained for the certificates given at the mint, where gold is deposited for coinage, it is probable that not a pennyweight would be taken there. These certificates generally command from three to five per cent. premium. I make these observations to show that there is no way at present of ascertaining the correct amount of the precious metal obtained in this county.

*Second inquiry.—Do the improvements in machinery, the experience in the process of working and collecting, with the aid and lights of science, &c., promise an increase in the products?*

That there will be an increase in the products of the present over that of the last year, admits of no doubt; and that this increase will continue to advance for years to come, is equally certain.

The gradual enlargement of the gold region, the number of persons turning their attention to the business, the mills that are now going up, (the most of them, however, are on a limited scale,) the improvements in the modes of working, and in general management—all go to leave no doubt upon the subject.

As to the "improvements in machinery," to which you allude, they have been considerable within the past two years: it is believed, however, that our existing plans are far from being perfect.

The defects in the present mode of extraction are well known to those most extensively engaged in the business; and some of them, at this time, are turning their attention toward the introduction of other methods promising more economy and greater results. Grinding the ore in water with the vertical stone, which is the method practised in Chili, is now the process most generally used here.

For the *quartz* ores, particularly where the particles of gold are not very minute, but of some size, and inclined to be round rather than flat, so as to sink easily, the vertical or Chili mill answers admirably. One great advantage that it possesses is, that the reduction of the ore, the amalgamation with quicksilver, and working off extraneous matter, all go on at the same time. But, for ores of other classes, such as the various oxides of iron, particularly the lighter sorts, for the sulphurets of iron, and where the pyrites are in a state of decomposition, indeed, for the whole class of pyritic ores, more especially when the process is conducted with quicksilver, the vertical stones or Chilian mill, will not produce good results. Whether it is that the gold is mineralized, or, if mechanically combined, each particle coated with the sulphur or other substances, so it is, that its affinity for the quicksilver is destroyed; and while the amalgamation is imperfect, the quicksilver is cut up into extremely fine globules, and, as some think, oxidized; and, in this state, a large per cent. of it passes off with the current of waters.

The liabilities of the vertical or Chilian mill to become disordered, the waste of gold and quicksilver, the irregularity of results from the same ores, the want of proper checks on the workmen, together with minor objections, it is probable, will, in the course of a few years more, cause these mills to be in a great measure discontinued, except in small establishments, and for certain classes of ores in the larger ones.

*Third inquiry—From the observations made on the formation and geology of the country, can any certain calculation be made as to the durability of the mines?*

The auriferous veins of North Carolina have not yet been sufficiently developed to justify any positive conclusions on this head. As yet not a single shaft in the whole range of country has been carried down to the depth of 100 feet. Seventy to eighty feet is the greatest depth yet attained, and thirty feet is more than an average on the principal digging. As far, however, as these experiments go, they furnish no cause to doubt the durability of the mines; for thus far the well defined veins not only retain their first size, but in many cases become larger, and more often than otherwise improve in richness. This circumstance has given rise to an idea among the common workmen that the vein grows richer about the time it reaches water. On the whole, when we consider that, in Mexico, Saxony, and



other great mining districts, veins have been successfully followed downward more than 2,500 feet, the probability that the veins here will improve, is at least as great as that they will become poorer.

It is not in the nature of things that any considerable portion of the whole number of veins existing here, much less all of them, has already been discovered.

The usual way that discoveries are made, is, to take some of the earth or gravel lying about the top rocks, and wash it in an iron pan. If any fine particles of gold are found, the vein is known to be auriferous, and its degree of richness and value is judged of by a variety of circumstances. This fine gold, without doubt, comes out of the vein, the top of which had been disintegrated, and fallen to pieces. There are many bold veins in every district, the tops of which show no gold, while other indicating substances are abundant. The probability is, that some of these, at a greater depth, may prove highly auriferous.

When we consider the extent of the gold formation, the shortness of the time since first known, and the very limited knowledge is generally had of the whole subject, the conclusion is a rational one, that the discoveries have only commenced.

It is but a little more than five years since *Denizen Olmstead, Esq.*, then a professor in the University of North Carolina, and geologist of the State, and now a professor in Yale College, after traversing the country and examining its phenomena, published a geological report, in which he conjectures that the "Gold Country" could be embraced by a circle of eighteen miles, its radii described round a point eight miles west by south of the mouth of the Uwhare river.

We now know that this imaginery circle, though within, the gold formation, composes but an inconsiderable portion of it. I mention the subject to show how new the subject is, and not to disparage Professor Olmstead, or his useful researches in North Carolina. He is a gentleman of acknowledged worth and science; and his reports on the gold mines of North Carolina were not a little instrumental in giving that impulse which has since, and in so short a time, produced such astonishing developments.

Reviewing all that has been said on the subject, you at once see that the whole business is yet in its infancy; and the only cause for wonder is, that it is not more so, or that so much has been done in so short a time, particularly when we recollect the ignorance and prejudices that had to be overcome, and the ridicule so liberally bestowed on the few who first engaged in the business.

If the work progresses as rapidly for some years to come, as it has for the two past years, the changes in the appearance of things will become very striking. There are some persons of intelligence, mostly, however, at a distance, who seem to apprehend that the mines here will produce consequences like those that followed to Spain and her colonies from the discovery of the mines of South America and Mexico. Without stopping to inquire how far these consequences were occasioned by the mines of the new world, I will remark that no sort of analogy is to be found in the condition and circumstances of the two countries, and that neither the statesman nor philosopher need anticipate similar results here.

That great effects will be produced, is beyond question; but they will show themselves in the increasing prosperity of the country.

Among the advantages that will follow from the development of the mines, is the encouragement they give to agriculture. They will subduct from agriculture some of its surplus labor, and give it new employments.

They create *home markets* for the surplus products of the farmer. This will encourage him to improve his farm, and increase the productiveness of his lands. As yet the influence has not been much felt in this way, but a close observer may see that the movement has commenced; nor will it be generally perceptible, until the division of labor more fully takes place between the *farmer* and the *miner*. *Mining* and *farming* are two very different pursuits; and farmers will soon see that it is prudent for them to stick to the plough, and sell or lease their veins, if they have any, to the miners.

An important change will also take place in the staples of the gold country. Cotton will be less and less cultivated in the mining districts, while the bread stuffs, farinaceous and succulent vegetables, and stock, will claim the chief attention. This change in the staples of the agriculturist will in itself produce important effects. I look upon it, that the introduction of the cotton plant has, in the end, proven a much greater curse than blessing to the southern States; at least to that part of them above the alluvial and sand formations, and which sketches on the parallel of the Alleghanies.

The opening of the mines, and the prospect they present for profitable employment, will, in some degree, check that spirit of emigration which has been carrying off so many of our most enterprising and useful citizens, and will bring into the country men of wealth, intelligence, business habits, and general enterprise.

The mechanical arts of the country will make rapid improvements. The order and system practised about the mining establishments will be imitated and introduced into the other pursuits and occupations of life. But while these general advantages will result to the country, it need not be concealed that some effects will be produced of a contrary tendency. You may readily imagine some of these as growing out of increased wealth, sometimes too much accumulating in the hands of the few.

The opening of the mines has had another effect—that of creating a rage for the gold business. This induces many persons to rush into it, without the necessary precautions or information. Many of these possess but few of the qualifications necessary for the new business. They are ignorant of the nature of mines or the art of mining; they lack the necessary capital and the habits suited to the pursuits; and the inevitable consequence must be, that more than half will sink their money, and fail in their enterprise. Nor is it unlikely that some possessing better advantages will also fail, for much depends on obtaining good localities; and in making investments, sometimes the most discreet and cautious may err. These failures and mishaps will co-operate with other causes to throw the mines into the hands of a distinct class of men, who, having a knowledge of the business, and having capital at command, will conduct the true mining operations of the country.

All these effects, whether good or bad, it should be known, will not be confined to North Carolina. Virginia and South Carolina will, to a very considerable extent, feel their influence. The people of the upper parts of these States have vastly more interest in the mines than is now generally supposed. A few years will show that this opinion is not unfounded.

I have thus, sir, at much greater length than I anticipated when I commenced, given you my views on the mining prospects of the country. Should this letter furnish you any facts or information that may be of use to you in your inquiry, I shall feel much gratified.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient humble servant,

To the Hon. S. P. CARSON,

CHARLES FISHER,

Chairman of the select committee.

DEAR SIR: Since I have been in Washington, I have had many questions asked me respecting the gold mines of North and South Carolina; and learning that you have the subject under consideration in Congress, I send you my views on it. The geological views are such as I have formed after a very careful examination; and although I do not know that any person concurs with me in opinion, yet I believe further inquiries will lead to the conclusion, which must force itself on all minds, that the gold of our country is the product (or rather educt) of decomposed auriferous pyrites.

As to the necessity of measures being taken to prevent adulteration, I think there can be no doubt; and if the General Government should undertake it, it must be done through the instrumentality of the mint. A proper officer sent out by that department to examine all bars, and, where he finds them pure, to put the mint stamp on them, would be of great efficacy in preventing adulteration, and render the trade in gold safe. Should you not be able to mature the system this session, it may be well that a scientific mineralogist should be appointed by the President to visit and examine the gold regions of the south, and mature a plan to prevent adulterations. Such an appointment would be valuable in many respects, besides enabling the General Government to decide how far it ought to grant its protection.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

A. BLANDING.

Honorable S. P. CARSON.

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#### GOLD MINES IN THE CAROLINAS.

The gold region of the south covers the whole upper part of North and South Carolina, and is supposed to spread itself into Virginia and Georgia. Its geological position is a belt of *secondary* formation, covering the *primitive* between the mountains and the ridge of sand hills which stretch the whole length of the southern States, about equidistant from the ocean and the Alleghany. Passing from the sand hills to the mountains on the large rivers, and their beds will be found to be worn down to the primitive granite rocks, except in a few places where the granite is covered by clay, slate, trap, and epidote rocks. But, passing up the ridges between these rivers, and the whole formation appears *secondary* or *transition*, here and there pierced by granite rocks, which evidently form the substratum on which the other formations rest. Its rocks are white and ferruginous, quartz, clay, slate, talc, soap stone, epidote, and trap rocks, &c. In it are found iron in all its variety of combination with other minerals, such as the micaceous oxid, plumbago, martial pyrites, &c. But the *pyritical* formation is the most interesting, since it is most evidently the origin of the gold of this region. It is found that all the martial pyrites of the south, in their crystallized state, are slightly auriferous, but the gold is rarely in such abundance as to be worth separating. The process costs more than the product. But, in the gold region of the south, nature has, in a great measure, performed the process to our hands. In the process of ages, the immense masses of pyritical rocks have been decomposed, or, where the crystallized cribs of the super sulphuret of iron were contained in quartz rocks below the surface, the iron and sulphur have been decomposed, and carried off by the action of water, while the

gold, from its superior specific gravity, has been deposited at the bottom or on the sides of the cells of the quartz rock which were once occupied by these crystals. The quartz rock here is cellular, and has the appearance of *honeycomb*, deeply tinged with orange yellow. Where there has been an entire disintegration of the pyritical rocks, the gold is found in grains or dust mixed with the sand and gravel formed from this disintegration. This forms what is called the *surface mine*. It is in some places within a few inches of the surface of the earth, at others many feet below it. It is covered by clay or vegetable soil, and usually rests on talc or clay slate. This stratum is sometimes only a few inches thick, and at others several feet. It is evidently formed of the disintegrated rocks, now reduced to sand, gravel, fragments of quartz of all colors, and other minerals. The gold is collected from this stratum by washing till the lighter particles are carried off, and then the grains of gold are picked out by hand, or the gold dust is collected by amalgamation, and the quicksilver is evaporated, leaving the gold as the residue in its pure state. This, in the country, is called *burnt gold*.

The *branch* mines, as they are called, are mere depositories of the grains of gold in the branches (brooks) which have worn down their beds to the slate and talc rocks. The gold is here found in the hollows and cavities of these rocks, and collected as from the surface mines, but usually with less labor.

In both the *surface* and *branch* mines fragments of quartz are found, which contain gold exhibiting the appearance of solder used for re-uniting their broken parts. Where much of this rock is found, gold is collected with ease; but this is rather a rare occurrence. At *Harris's* mine, these rocks are so abundant and rich that four hands usually collect \$100 of gold in a day. Its extent is uncertain.

The real gold mine on which dependence is to be placed, as being apparently inexhaustible, is of a character entirely different from those above described. The mines are found in veins passing into the hills, and their depth is as yet unascertained. As the excavations extend down, they become richer, and when the water line is passed there is usually a change to richer ore, if that term may be applied to a metal which never oxidates by exposure to ordinary chemical agents. The formation is here of two kinds—one, where the quartz rock is a perfect honeycomb, or cellular, having its cells gilded with the thin layers above mentioned; the other is where the rock has been decomposed with the pyrites, forming a new mass of ferruginous sandstone without cells, yet extending into the hills in veins of an unknown depth. This rock, whether cellular or in mass, forms the real gold mines of the south. The stone is raised and ground by water, steam, or animal power, washed and amalgamated. A bushel of this stone, as it is raised, will produce from one to two dollars of gold, rarely more. It is sometimes so poor as not to be worth working, but this is not usually the case; most of the veins are rich.

Where amalgamation is used, the gold is left pure after evaporation of the quicksilver. In this stage of the process there is little danger of adulteration. But when these masses, which are called "*burnt gold*," are melted down, and formed into bars, alloy may be added, and this is beginning to take place; and when it will be carried to any considerable extent, the sale and purchase of bars will cease, and gold in that form will be no longer a medium of exchange. Every one who makes gold must then send it to the mint himself, or not get its value. This will fall heavily on the small workers. It is, therefore, supposed that it may be an object with the General Government



to prevent adulteration of a metal, most of which must be coined at their mint, and to give protection to the purchasers of gold, and value to it as a medium of exchange. This, it is supposed, may be done by directing the mint to establish an assaying officer in the gold country, who shall examine all bars of gold presented to him, and, if found pure, shall put on it the mint stamp, at the same time leaving it entirely optional with every person to obtain the stamp or not, as he pleases.

It may be interesting to learn the present production of these mines. From the best information that could be procured from all the mines in North and South Carolina in October last, the monthly product was found to be at least \$50,000, making an annual product of about six hundred thousand dollars. Every day is bringing to light new and rich mines; and, in October last, not one fourth of the mines then discovered were in operation. At the old works, more extensive means were about to be employed: science was lending its aid to the former slovenly manual process, while new mines are every day opening, and new works erecting, to carry on the business upon an extended scale. There seems to exist no doubt among those best acquainted with the subject, that in another year the annual product of gold in North and South Carolina, will exceed two millions of dollars.

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CHARLOTTE, 27th March, 1830.

SIR: I acknowledge the honor I have had to receive your letter of 3d ultimo, in which, as chairman of a select committee, you request information concerning the gold mines of North Carolina.

Before I reply more particularly to the *queries* you have put, I would state that recent correspondence with the Hon. Charles Fisher, of Salisbury, assures me, he is occupied in preparing quite an extended view of the present condition of the mining interest in the several counties, with some account of the first discoveries of gold in deposit and vein, to be with other remarks submitted to the Hon. the chairman, in such form as may, if judged fitting, be annexed to the committee's report. Mr. Fisher's means of information, since the commencement of mining operations in this State, have been so superior, his attention so unremittingly attracted to their progressive advance, his knowledge and estimates so accurate, and his public life has given him such favorable notoriety as authority for his communications, that informed, as I am, of his purpose, it would seem obtrusive in me to go over the same, either anticipating or following him; and it will be unnecessary to give my few observations any formal shape.

Referring to your question of "What amount of gold it *may* be estimated has been derived from the mines during the past year?" it is obvious that the mint and bank reports being only items, rather than amounts, and when much is consumed in the arts, much exported in bullion, and much purloined passes through secret channels, any estimates must be, to a great degree, conjectural. In the course of a tour through the gold mining districts, made during the last summer, I endeavored to ascertain the then weekly yield, and thought that putting the washings and vein works of *Anson, Cabarras, Guilford, Montgomery, and Davidson*, at three thousand dwts., *Mecklenburg* at four thousand, *Lincoln, Burke and Rutherford*, at three thousand dwts., would not be overrating. Indeed, it was within your knowledge that *Brindle's* mine, in *Burke* alone, was reputed to be yielding two thousand dwts. and upwards per week.

In reply to your second and fourth questions, "*Do the improvements in machinery, the expense in the process of working, &c., promise an increase in the products of the present year,*" and "*with the products of the mines be an increased ratio during the present and past year?*" it certainly is reasonable to calculate that the products of the mines, that is, of the deposits and washings, will be an increased ratio during the past and present year; and it could be little better than impertinent for me to state to you, as a matter of information, the almost incredible accessions that, in a very short space of time, have been made of capital, of numbers, of character, and good management, directed towards this branch of mining, both in the section of country you immediately represent and elsewhere.

The product of the vein works are, however, dependent upon such different principles, that it is not easy to fix upon any comparative ratio of increase for so limited a period of one or two years. For such a space of time it is probable that, if an increasing confidence shall induce the application of large capitals, and requisite skill in using them, the proprietors would be contented to defer the expectation of deriving profit from their investments until the developments of the veins and establishments for extraction were carried far enough to warrant continued and regular results, instead of the fluctuations which must be consequent upon too much impatience to derive a return from outlays. In fact, since the commencement of mining upon the veins, had those engaged felt more assurance on the same assurance which is now felt in it as a business, less would have been withdrawn from the works, and the establishments at the present time have been in a situation and efficiency adapted to, and justified by existing circumstances.

To say nothing of the large amount of capital now employed in this country, where, two years ago, scarcely a dollar was risked, it is to be expected that the capitalists of Europe will soon turn towards mining North Carolina, a part of the sums which have hitherto been expended in Mexico and South America, and the mines will certainly afford profitable employment for that large proportion of the slaves in North and South Carolina and Georgia, who have been for years past a burdensome expense, instead of a source of profit to their owners, so that the constant and rapid accumulation of capital, and of knowledge and capacity to direct its application, is perhaps the surest indication of the future prospects this State has in her inestimable mines. Much has been done in a space of time very short, and under more than usual embarrassments of new undertakings; the field for extending and progressive operations is ample, the means of subsistence abundant, and the climate mild and healthful, and all the materials for mining, or after processes of reduction, cheap and inexhaustible.

Nothing could have tended so effectually or speedily to develop and turn to account the various but hitherto unproductive and neglected resources of the State, than their needed application to mining proposes. Industry and enterprise have been roused, and high rewards offered to mechanical skill, and a ready sale for agricultural produce, where before a large population were singularly inert, and discouraged, from want of seaports, of internal communications, of manufactures of any profitable staple, or of any stimulus to exertion.

But it is not to her own representative, lately among us, that I need speak of the past or of present prospects.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

J. H. BISSELL.

Hon. S. P. CARSON, *Ho. Reps.*

## SWANN PONDS, BURKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA,

*April 3, 1830.*

DEAR SIR: Have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular of the 3d February. In answer to your first inquiry, have to state, that I have not been engaged, to any extent, in working of the deposit mines during the past year; my attention having been principally directed to raising ore from a vein mine in the county of Rutherford, in which the Messrs. Carsons and myself are concerned, and in erecting machinery to be impelled by water power, for grinding the ore and vein dirt. We expect it to go into operation in all the month of May, and are sanguine of success.

The following data and remarks will afford the best answer to the three last inquiries that I am enabled to give. Twelve months ago, there had not been collected in the county of Burke, \$500 worth of gold.

There has been placed to my credit, with the State Bank of North Carolina, at Raleigh, since the 31st of July last, when I commenced purchasing for that institution, upwards of 30,000 dwt. of gold bullion, at 84 cents the dwt.; all which has been exclusively collected in Burke. A conjectural estimate only can be formed of the proportion which this amount bears to the whole that has been collected within the county: it certainly does not exceed 20 per cent: my present purchases exceed, on an average, \$100 per day.

Experience is daily adding to the product of the mines that have been worked with any thing like system; and while some of the poorer deposits are abandoned, others, more promising and extensive, are daily discovered.

The fact, that numbers of our most intelligent, wealthy, and enterprising citizens from the eastern and middle counties of the State, after personal examination, are withdrawing their slaves entirely from the cultivation of cotton and tobacco, and removing them to the deposit mines in this county, while it proves conclusively the importance they are destined to assume, prevents even an approximation to ultimate results.

The discoveries of gold here, thus far, have been made by men who have only a practical knowledge of mining; acquired by a few months' experience.

The country, I may say, is unexplored by the eye of science. They have proved, by discoveries already made, that, in addition to the deposits, veins of rich gold ore abound in the secondary chain of mountains and hills which traverse this section of the country east of the Alleghany. The facts, in this instance, are in consonance with geological deductions; and, reasoning from analogy, it is these veins that are to give permanency to the mining interests in this country.

The general want of science on mining subjects, and want of capital, have thus far, and may for some time, retard the working of the veins extensively. But the capital and enterprise necessary to develop, in some measure, the resources of the country, are concentrating in the mining region.

And while interest and patriotism dictate the wish, facts induce the belief, that, in this, as in every other pursuit to which American skill and enterprise have been fairly directed, the success will outrun the calculations of the statesman and political economist; that this new, and to us all important, interest would be greatly promoted and encouraged by the establishment among us of a branch of the mint, or office for assaying our gold, and ascertaining its value, there can be no doubt. It is for Congress in their wisdom to determine whether this boon will be granted; it is the only one which western North Carolina, with all the disadvantages she has heretofore labor-

ed under, has ever sought of the General Government. You will pardon me, sir, if I have been more diffuse than the scope of your inquires would seem to warrant; it is because the chairman of the committee is lost sight of in addressing my immediate representative and personal friend.

With great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

ISAAC T. AVERY.

The Honorable S. P. CARSON,

*Chairman of the select committee, &c.*

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*Extract of a letter from John A. Jones, Esq., to Col Thomas Foster, dated Milledgeville, (Georgia,) 23d November, 1830.*

SIR: Your letter bearing date Greensboro, 19th inst. desiring information on the subject of the gold mines, and the propriety of establishing a mint, or a branch of the mint, in the gold regions of the south, was received by me yesterday, and been reflected on as the subject demands.

I regret that it is not in my power to give you more definite information as to the gold mines of Georgia, but I have it not. Indeed, I do not believe the information you desire can be obtained, entitled to higher pretensions than conjecture; and as such, I pray you consider most of what I shall say.

You no doubt are aware that some gold was found in Habersham county, in the spring or early in the summer of 1829; from thence the examinations extended into Hall. From an examination of the map, and a recollection of the relative position of the geological strata of rock and minerals known to exist from Maryland south, I was induced to believe that the gold region extended as far south as the termination of the Blue Ridge in the Cherokee country; and, having some interest in Carroll county, I determined to examine my lands there. With this view, Mr. Howard, the comptroller, and I, visited Carroll in March, 1830, but on our arrival we found ourselves destitute of information; that, although, we were well satisfied of the existence of gold in the county, we were obliged to return without making any discoveries. In April we visited Hall and Habersham, for information. From that country I returned through Carroll, and found that several persons had made valuable discoveries in different places. About the middle of June they commenced operations in the county, and I presume that since then three hundred men, on an average, have been engaged, and have realized a product of \$2 50 per day to the hand. I know many statements have been made of a greater number of hands and more profitable product, but I have always believed them exaggerated.

The gold region of Georgia extends from the northern parts of Carroll to the ridge which divides the southern and western waters, a distance of more than 100 miles. It is to be found in rich veins, in every description of soil, from the rich black loam to the barren sands of the pure mountains, and in juxtaposition with every description of rock known to that region of country; and although a great deal is said about gold blossom, and much stress has been laid on signs, the principal knowledge which I have obtained from experience is, that no signs are to be relied on. I have searched for the metal in vain where every external and internal appearance indicated abundance; and I have found it in rich and poor land—level and broken land—land covered with various kind of stone, and on land with no stone at all. With



regard to our prospects, I have no doubt very heavy profits will be realized, and although some, who are so unfortunate as to make bad locations, will lose money, yet, to the mass of persons engaged in mining, it must necessarily prove the best business we have ever been engaged in.

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*Extract of a letter from Major Trippe to the Hon. Thomas F. Foster, dated Clarkesville, Habersham county, Georgia, December 7, 1830.*

DEAR SIR: Agreeably to your request, I will now undertake to give you some account of the mining operations for gold in this part of the country, the extent to which they are carried on, and the probable prospects of those engaged in this business. Early in the winter and spring of the year 1829, a few persons, who had some knowledge of the mining districts in North Carolina, from the great similarity of situation, soil, and geological formation of the earth in this country, were induced to believe that gold might be discovered here, and commenced to search for it. Their success was not great, and they were regarded as visionary enthusiastic misers; but their small success encouraged others to search, and they very soon began to develop the resources of the country. The discovery of Powell and Richardson's mines, and the immense gains of the operators in them, caused the whole country to commence a most general, persevering, and indefatigable search for the precious metal.

It was carried into the county of Hall, and extended, in a short time, to the Cherokee nation, at least to that part of it bordering on the counties of Hall and Habersham. The gold is discovered in the western parts of those counties, principally in the gravel, next underneath the upper stratum of alluvial earth in the bottoms of the rivers, creeks, and branches, and not unfrequently on the ridges, and in every variety of soil. There have been some discoveries made of what the miners term *vein* mines, as contradistinguished from *surface* mines before mentioned, and which vein mines are regarded as much the most valuable and productive, and require greater expense of machinery to pound up the rock and extract the gold. There are none of these yet in operation, the experiments being confined altogether to the surface and deposit mines.

The gold has been discovered, principally, in a tract of country in the western part of this county, and of Hall, and extending through the southeastern part of the Cherokee nation, and into the county of Carroll, embracing an extent of country in length, from northeast to southwest, of about one hundred and fifty miles, and varying from a very few to fifteen or twenty miles in width. In all this whole extent of country, I apprehend that the operations of the gold miners, even in the Cherokee nation, have been merely experiments, and that the business is but in its infancy. It is doubtful, and probably always will remain so, whether those engaged in this business will generally prosper, and whether a majority of them are not engaged in a losing concern; yet, in the aggregate, they are collecting together, and constantly sending away, an immense quantity of gold bullion. Of the probable quantity, I can give you no account upon which you ought to rely; but if you were to call upon some of the merchants or brokers in Augusta, who

deal in it, they could, I expect, give you better information. Nor can I give you any satisfactory account of the number of persons engaged in mining, as the operations of a great many of them are carried on in a very desultory manner, sometimes six or seven thousand being engaged, and, at other times, probably not more than as many hundred. Throughout the whole extent of what is commonly called the gold region, indications of it may be perceived, and small particles found, but there are not more than twenty or thirty which now yield a profit, some of these very small, others very large; but new discoveries of valuable and rich mines are constantly being made, and will be, no doubt, for a long time yet to come. Although I believe that a majority of the adventurers will be sadly disappointed in their expectations, yet the business is and ought to be of great importance to the country, and will continue to be of more and more importance during, probably, this century.

There are several considerations which induce me to believe that the project for establishing a branch of the United States' Mint, or an assayer's office, or something of that kind, would be of great benefit to this part of the country, and probably to the Government. I think it probable that a great many persons who now sell their gold to speculators, who send it out of the country to foreign markets, would be induced to have it coined for themselves. There would then be near them an institution in which they would have confidence, that might assay their gold and determine its value, and prevent many impositions in the trade, to which those not familiarly acquainted with the article are constantly liable.

The Georgia gold is finer, and worth two or three cents the pennyweight in the market more than the gold from the North Carolina mines; and it is not unusual for persons to carry on a speculation, by buying up the North Carolina gold, and selling it for gold taken out of the Georgia mines. The dealers in the article in Augusta, in several instances, have sustained losses when they came to resell in Philadelphia or New York, or to have it coined at the mint. Actions for deceit will be resorted to; but the causes will be rendered almost desperate, on account of the great difficulty of identifying the parcels, and making the other necessary proof.

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GAINESVILLE, GA., *December 13, 1830.*

DEAR SIR: Yours of the 19th ult. came duly to hand, and we cheerfully answer your several interrogatories according to the most accurate information we can obtain.

In the summer of 1829, gold was first discovered in this State, in Habersham county, about thirty miles north of this, on the waters of the Chattahoochee river near its source, on the land of a Mr. Powell. This mine is at the foot of the Blue Ridge, ten or twelve miles from the principal ridge. Other mines were immediately discovered in the circumjacent country, and along the direction of the Blue Ridge in a southwestern course; we understand, also, mines of importance have recently been discovered in Rabun county.

In last December, pursuing the southwestern direction of the Blue Ridge, in a spur of said ridge, pointing a south course, consisting of a numerous

cluster of very elevated hills, and in that part of the Cherokee nation lying between the Chestatee and Etowah rivers, where said rivers approach and run parallel with each other for several miles, gold was discovered in great abundance; and, by the first of February, (the country being accessible to every person,) not less than a thousand persons had assembled for the purpose of digging for gold.

By the first of June their numbers had increased to something like three thousand; not more, however, than one-half of the number there at any one time were industriously engaged in collecting the precious metal.

In June last, a temporary suspension ensued, from the appearance of the United States' soldiery in that quarter. Operations ceased about one month, when they recommenced, and continued until early in September last, when they were effectually removed by the troops of the United States.

Simultaneously with the discovery in the Cherokee nation, gold mines were discovered in almost every stream running into the Chestatee river, from the northwestern boundary of this county on that stream to its confluence with the Chattahoochie river, making about forty miles from point to point. Other mines have also been discovered on the waters of the Chattahoochie river, along its whole course through this county, amounting to fifty or sixty miles.

As regards the propriety of establishing an assayer's office, or a branch of the United States' Mint, somewhere in this section of country, we think the wants of this community, as well as the interest of the Government, in diffusing within its own borders the basis of all paper credit, imperiously demand it. It surely behoves a Government, whose constitution declares that nothing but gold and silver shall be a legal tender, to add every facility both to its procurement and detainer. Had such an institution been established here one year ago as that alluded to, the United States might now have had many additional thousand dollars of gold coin circulating at home, which is now in Europe and other parts of the world.

From the avidity of gold buyers, no gold discovered, perhaps, is of superior fineness; and, from the inability of finders to test its fineness, much is gained by speculation, as well as the removal of the metal without the country. Did such an institution exist here, the Government would not only realize a reasonable per cent. for coining; but where is the individual who would not prefer storing away his surplus funds in that currency alone which the law recognizes as valid and tenderable? We make these few suggestions with much deference, acknowledging our very partial knowledge of the operation of the United States' Mint.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

ROBERT MITCHELL,  
DAVID C. NEAL.

Col. THOS. F. FOSTER,  
*Washington City.*

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*Letter from Colonel Samuel N. Wales, Habersham county, to the honorable Thomas F. Foster, member of the House of Representatives, dated Clarkesville, December 15, 1830.*

DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 19th ult. from Greensboro', requesting information in relation to the gold region of Georgia, has been received.

No event within my recollection has produced so much excitement among the people of our State, as the discovery of gold in it. Nearly all looked on it, for a time, as a certain source of riches and wealth to all who engaged in the search of it. But the "gold fever" (as it is called) has now, to a considerable extent, abated, and we can consider the subject, without being influenced by its dazzling allurements. It affords me pleasure to add, that, notwithstanding the undue excitement produced by the discovery of gold, and which induced a great many to embark in the business of digging for it, and in speculating on lands containing it, no one has been seriously injured; while many have, to a considerable extent, had their golden hopes realized. The discovery has also imparted an impetus to almost every description of employment; and the surrounding country now presents a scene of spirited improvement, and holds out fair promises that it will shortly become the most desirable part of the State.

The first discovery of gold in this county was made by a gentleman who had removed here from the neighborhood of the mines in North Carolina. He was induced to search for it, by the great similarity of the appearances on the face of the soil with that of the gold region of North Carolina. His success induced others to examine, until it was finally ascertained that all the land in the county, bordering on the Cherokee line, and on the base of the Blue Ridge, abounded more or less in the precious metal. The country in which it is found, is mainly broken and mountainous, and too poor for the usual culture of our planters.

The miners in this county have, as yet, confined their operations to the branches and watercourses in what is called "surface" and "deposit" mines, to distinguish them from the "vein" or "ridge" mines. The "vein" mines are considered far more valuable than any other, although it requires great labor and expense to work them successfully; the ore in them is sometimes found near the surface of the earth; but, generally, excavations have to be made to a considerable depth, before any thing of much value can be reached. The great labor which is required to work these mines, in addition to the increased expense of the machinery, has, as yet, prevented any of the miners in this State from operating in them. It is, however, believed, that there are as many of these kind of mines in the county, as there are of any other; and the miners are now directing their attention to them. The expense of working the "surface" and "deposit" mines is trifling, and the labor by no means arduous. No laborer in the mines in this county has descended more than six feet below the surface of the earth.

I am unable to inform you what number of persons have been engaged in the mining business, in this county, during the present year, nor can I, with any approach to accuracy, inform you as to the quantity of gold which has been dug in the county; for purchasers of gold, during the summer, were nearly as plenty as the diggers for it. The gold was purchased, and taken to some market, as soon as it was dug up; the most of it was sold in Augusta, at a profit of from two and a half to five per cent. on the dwt.; the balance of it was sent to New York, Philadelphia, and to London.

The prospects of those who may be disposed to engage in the mining business can be known in no other way but by experiment; for this is the only certain test of the richness of a mine. In this county, the mining business, as yet, has been but little else than experiment; it was a new occupation to the people, of which they were profoundly ignorant. There are



two mines in this county, the operations of which have been conducted by gentlemen who had had experience in the mines of North Carolina. At each of these mines, the receipts have been, on an average, four dwts. a day to the hand, including all the time consumed in making preparations for working. I consider these two mines, as not a very unfair test of the richness of the Georgia gold region; they are fifteen miles distant from each other, and on different watercourses. There are ten other mines in the county, which have yielded a profit: the remainder, about fifteen in number, have not compensated the owners for the expense and labor employed on them; the failure of these is probably owing as much to a want of knowledge in the business, and to a want of the proper machinery, as to any thing else. I am of the opinion they can all be worked with profit; and that there are many mines, yet undiscovered, as rich as any which have been brought to light.

There is every appearance about some of these mines, to induce a belief that they have been worked before; by whom, no correct idea can be formed. There are no traditions among the Indians of the present day, in relation to them. Tools and other implements for working them have been found at the mines, from two to four feet beneath the surface.

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CAPITOL, 21st February, 1831.

SIR: according to your suggestion, I state, in relation to the gold mines of South Carolina, that I have no data, at present, by which I could ascertain the amount of gold annually found in South Carolina; but my own impressions have always been, that the quantity found there was not much less than that found in North Carolina, and much greater than the quantity found in Georgia. Several gold mines, of great value, have been discovered in Chesterfield, Lancaster, and Kershaw, (within my congressional district,) and after being worked only so long as served to exhibit their immense value, disputes about *title* arose, writs of injunction were served, and the work suspended. Owing to these causes, but few of those mines are now worked, and probably will not be until the questions of title are adjusted by law. At Brewer's mine, in Chesterfield, there are frequently from one hundred and fifty to two hundred hands employed, who realize from \$1½ to \$3 each per day. Many of those laborers (I believe the most of them) are from North Carolina, and no doubt carry with them into that State their share of the gold, say two-thirds or three-fourths; and hence it is received at the mint of the United States as the product of North Carolina. From all I do know and have stated on this subject, it will be admitted, I presume, that the gold mine interest in South Carolina is, at least, very considerable; and as it lies at a great distance from the points where it is most likely the assay offices would be established in North Carolina and Georgia, I flatter myself there will be no objection, either on the part of the committee or the House, to insert *South Carolina* in the bill, or to extend to the gold mine interest of that State the same accommodations that are provided for those of North Carolina and Georgia.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient humble servant,

JAMES BLAIR.

Hon. G. C. VERPLANCK.

